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Expatriate

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Expatriate

David Thomas

In that month of lightening
The casualty lists were issued again.
It appeared to me that anything there
To do with life was unlikely;
The eyes of its people were distant,
And the heart of its government dead.
There were rumors
You could see the face of God tattooed
On the bearded lady's lips.
Still, the cafes were filled,
The night prospered
(The small arms fire well outside the city),
And love affairs, true or illicit, maintained.
As for my affairs, don't ask:
When my lover told me what had been
Occurring for quite some time
My heart stopped, and went cold,
And then I wondered what I used to do
With my spare time.

Later, I drew up many
Of the lists myself. There was
Never any question of me being
Connected with the front.
Rather, I was seen as a neutral figure,
Who, in this capacity, would be
Of use to the government.
In that month of lightening
The casualty lists grew to enormous lengths.
There were rumors
That even the bearded lady
Turned away at the sight of them.